

*Chow*

18 October 1974

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Contact with News Media Representative

1. On 14 October 1974, while in New York City for other reasons, I spoke with Mrs. Virginia Kassel, a representative of Station WNEW, a public television station in New York. Mrs. Kassel is in charge of putting together the 13-part series on the Adams family that is to be shown on public television in the fall of 1975.

2. I telephoned Mrs. Kassel because I believed I have potentially interesting information on two important characters in the series: Henry, the historian, and Charles, his brother. My data on Henry is back-fence-type gossip concerning his relationship with Elizabeth Sherman Cameron, one of the great belles of that era. As it turned out, Mrs. Kassel had already learned what I know; Mrs. Cameron is being ducked in the series, however, as her inclusion would unnecessarily complicate the main theme.

3. Of potentially greater value is my information on Charles Adams, whose business career provides the excuse for ending the series with the fourth generation of the Adams family. In the eyes of Mrs. Kassel, Charles' unsuccessful presidency of the Union Pacific Railroad characterizes the demise of the Adams family as a public force through its failure to make the adjustment necessary to be effective in the "modern" America that emerged after the Civil War. A major factor contributing to Charles' downfall in the Union Pacific was his inability to get Congress to pass the legislation required to put the line's financial affairs in order. My master's thesis, written in 1958, focused on why the Senate Judiciary Committee never reported out the necessary bill. The reasons include bribery by persons with names recognizable today.

4. All the information in my thesis was obtained from materials available to serious researchers. Most of the accounts were written as events unfolded, and I could find no significant discussion more recent than Charles' autobiography, published shortly after his death in 1915. Since the fifties, however, at least one book has been published in which the funding bill issue, including the bribery charges, was raised, so my information in no sense can be considered unique anymore. Nevertheless, since my discussion of the funding bill is fuller than the one in the book and draws on some different sources I wanted to call it to the attention of Mrs. Kassel. And having an extra copy, I told Mrs. Kassel I would send it to her. I also said that I would forward some other data that I had come across. Most of this can be categorized as descriptions of people and events as depicted by newspaper reporters on the scene. I have no idea if any of the material that I will be sending will be directly useful to the project, which has been under way four years and is at a stage where only minor revisions can be contemplated.

5. During our discussion, Mrs. Kassel asked where I worked and I told her. I also said that I found my studies of the people and events of the 1880's to be far and away the most valuable training for my work at the Agency, but I did not describe to her any of the jobs I have had here.

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